Summary – Manning The Gap   Dec. 18th, 2004 @ 10:39 pm

I use technology, I have for over twenty-years. But I'm not so caught up with these little beasties to lose sight that they are essentially tools. As such, a careful balance needs to be made so that we don't forget why or what role technology will have in the lives of our students. Many of the problems that I've encountered over the past years when it comes to integrating technology into the curriculum have been from the mismatch of operating paradigms, that so few teachers and administrators have moved past simple word processing and email to make connections with technology based on their own experience as educators. That's the step where innovation comes from. But we're so busy pushing technology, and make so many assumptions that the kids are just going to get it (which they do.... often, despite our efforts) that the real engine of change, teacher buy-in and usage, is stalled out or greatly hampered.

Add to that that technology moves at such a fast rate that the disconnect between what tech can do for us and what we actually do with it will continue to grow until what we do in the classroom will be largely meaningless and inefficient to point of it becoming laughable. My district is so intent on locking everything down that I imagine that students and teachers will eventually bring in their own devices (Treo650s, for example) and render the whole infrastructure meaningless. All I need to do is add printing capabilities, and a bit more compatibility with MS Office and all I will need is my phone/PDA and I won't need their network or their equipment.

A few things that I need to do... First, based on Covey's quadrant of needs, I need to not get so caught in putting out the daily fires that I not make progress moving the whole program forward (prioritize). Next, I need to encourage and work toward creating human networks among my staff members and between myself and other tech educators. As long as we're too busy with our heads down trying to plow through everything that needs to get done in the course of the day we'll never get past the ever growing pile on our desks or in our inboxes. And as long as we try to do this all alone and not support one another than all of our innovations and contributions with live and die with us and never spread to all those who would benefit from our struggles and efforts. The gap between

the technology dreamers and those of us in the trenches can be discouraging and depressing. But I have hope because of the energy and creativity that I see every day in my students and the appreciation that I feel from the teachers whom I work with. It more than makes up for the small-minded bean-counters and tech-nazis who are not educators and have no idea how wonderfully positive this stuff could become in the hands of an inspired five-year-old or fifteen-year-old. JBB